

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A layered filtering structure having a filter inlet side and a filter outlet side, said layered filtering structure comprising at least a first layer on a second layer, each layer comprising a non-woven web of metal fibers which has been sintered, said two layers being in contact with each other, wherein said first layer, most close to the filter inlet side has a porosity below 55 %, and wherein said second layer, closer to the filter outlet side has a porosity of at least 80% and which is at least 20 % greater than the porosity of said first layer.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Previously Presented) A structure according to claim 1, wherein said first layer comprises metal fibers with a diameter of less than 3  $\mu\text{m}$  and wherein said second layer comprises metal fibers with a diameter of at least three times the diameter of the fibers in the first layer.
4. (Previously Presented) A structure according to claim 1, wherein said first layer has a weight ranging between 300  $\text{g}/\text{m}^2$  and 600  $\text{g}/\text{m}^2$ .
5. (Previously Presented) A structure according to claim 1, wherein the first layer has at least one even surface.
6. (Previously Presented) A structure according to claim 1, wherein said structure further comprises a wire net which is fixed to the first layer or to the second layer.
7. (Previously Presented) A structure according to claim 1, wherein said structure is sandwiched between a first wire net and a second wire net, said first wire net comprising wires having a diameter  $d_1$ , said second wire net comprising wires having a diameter  $d_2$ , said first wire net being located at the inlet side, said second wire net having meshes and being

located at the outlet side, and the first wire net having meshes which are smaller than the meshes of the second wire net and the diameter d1 of the wires of the first wire net being thicker than the diameter d2 of the wires of the second wire net.

8. (Previously Presented) A structure according to claim 7, wherein said first wire net is a calandered wire net.
9. (Previously Presented) A structure according to claim 1, wherein said first layer is obtainable by cold isostatic pressing operation.
10. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a layered filtering structure, said method comprising:
  - (a) sintering a non-woven web of metal fibers to form a first layer;
  - (b) compacting said first layer to a porosity below 55%;
  - (c) providing a non-woven web of metal fibers to form a second layer;
  - (d) bringing said first compacted layer and the second layer in contact with each other to form a layered assembly;
  - (e) sintering said layered assembly to form a coherent entity wherein said second layer has a porosity which is at least 20% higher than the porosity of the first layer.
11. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 10 wherein said compacting is done by a cold isostatic pressing operation.
12. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 10, wherein said second layer has a porosity of at least 80%.
13. (Currently Amended) A structure according to claim 1, layered filtering structure having a filter inlet side and a filter outlet side, said layered filtering structure comprising at least a first layer on a second layer, each layer comprising a web of metal fibers which has been sintered, said two layers being in contact with each other, wherein said first layer, most close to the filter inlet side has a porosity below 55 %, and wherein

said second layer, closer to the filter outlet side has a porosity of at least 80% and which is at least 20 % greater than the porosity of said first layer, wherein said first layer and said second layer include metal fibers having a length ranging from one-half inch to six inches.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A ~~method according to claim 10, method of manufacturing a layered filtering structure, said method comprising:~~

- (a) sintering a web of metal fibers to form a first layer;
- (b) compacting said first layer to a porosity below 55%;
- (c) providing a web of metal fibers to form a second layer;
- (d) bringing said first compacted layer and the second layer in contact with each other to form a layered assembly;
- (e) sintering said layered assembly to form a coherent entity wherein said second layer has a porosity which is at least 20% higher than the porosity of the first layer;

wherein said first layer and said second layer include metal fibers having a length ranging from one-half inch to six inches.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A ~~method according to claim 10, method of manufacturing a layered filtering structure, said method comprising:~~

- (a) sintering a web of metal fibers to form a first layer;
- (b) compacting said first layer to a porosity below 55%;
- (c) providing a web of metal fibers to form a second layer;
- (d) bringing said first compacted layer and the second layer in contact with each other to form a layered assembly;
- (e) sintering said layered assembly to form a coherent entity wherein said second layer has a porosity which is at least 20% higher than the porosity of the first layer;

wherein bringing the first compacted layer and the second layer in contact with each other to form a layered assembly occurs after providing a web of metal fibers to form the second layer.

18. (Currently Amended) A ~~method according to claim 10, method of manufacturing~~ a layered filtering structure, said method comprising:

- (a) sintering a web of metal fibers to form a first layer;
- (b) compacting said first layer to a porosity below 55%;
- (c) providing a web of metal fibers to form a second layer;
- (d) bringing said first compacted layer and the second layer in contact with each other to form a layered assembly;
- (e) sintering said layered assembly to form a coherent entity wherein said second layer has a porosity which is at least 20% higher than the porosity of the first layer;

wherein bringing the first compacted layer and the second layer in contact with each other to form a layered assembly occurs after the second layer is formed.

19. (New) A layered filtering structure having a filter inlet side and a filter outlet side, said layered filtering structure comprising at least a first layer on a second layer, each layer comprising a web of metal fibers which has been separately sintered, said two layers being in contact with each other, wherein said first layer, most close to the filter inlet side has a porosity below 55 %, and wherein said second layer, closer to the filter outlet side has a porosity of at least 80% and which is at least 20 % greater than the porosity of said first layer.

20. (New) A structure according to claim 19, wherein each layer comprises a non-woven web of metal fibers.